

POSITIVE



Greenwich University

A Publication by Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies and the Diplomatic Academy

Pakistan's standing in the global rankings

Overview

Pakistan observed a slight improvement in the overall international rankings in 2021 covering socio-economic and political outcomes of the country. Several elements complemented the prospects including successful democratic transition, efficient counter-terrorism measures leading to enhanced peace and security, and foreign direct investment inflows under CPEC, among others. Albeit, decoupling economic growth from human development suggests that the country needs to enhance its scores in health, education and standard of living by ensuring political will, equitable financing and efficient governance to ensure parallel growth for marginalized segments as well. Civil and political liberties must grow hand in hand to ensure a conducive environment for democratic dialogue and accountability which ultimately supports its nation building process.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

Pakistan was placed at the 104th spot among 167 states on the global Democracy Index 2021, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Index from 0 (authoritarian regime) to 10 (full democracy)

Compiled based on indicators covering: Electoral process and pluralism, Civil liberties, Functioning of government, Political participation, and Political culture.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Pakistan ranked 161 out of 192 countries in the Human Development Index scoring 2022 0.562 out of 1.000 in 2018 compared to 0.560 out of 1.000 in 2017.

Index from 0 (low development) to 1 (very high development)

Compiled based on indicators covering: life expectancy, education, and per capita income

PRESS FREEDOM INDEX

Pakistan's press freedom rank dropped to 145 out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index, An annual ranking of countries published by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), an international non-governmental organization dedicated to safeguard the right to freedom of information.

Compiled based on indicators covering: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-censorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure.

TERRORISM INDEX

Terrorism Index in Pakistan decreased to 7.83 in 2021 from 7.92 in 2020.

Index from 0 (lowest impact) to 10 (highest impact)

Compiled based on indicators covering : Total number of terrorist incidents in a given year, total number of fatalities caused by terrorism in a given year, total number of injuries caused by terrorism in a given year and the approximate level of total property damage from terrorist incidents in a given year.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX

In 2021, index of economic freedom for Pakistan was 51.7 score. Though Pakistan index of economic freedom fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2002 - 2021 period ending at 51.7 score in 2021.

Compiled based on indicators covering: Market openness, Regulatory efficiency, Government size and the rule of law.

Positive Post is a strategic effort to project achievement and contributions of Pakistan. While showcasing Greenwich University's cultural diplomacy initiatives, it also encapsulates a compilation of different developments complementing Pakistan's socio-cultural, economic & Political outcomes

April 2025

17 April, 1953: Muhammad Ali Bogra is sworn as the new prime minister.

2 April 1954: Pakistan forms an alliance with Turkey which, although not including military cooperation, opens the way to the Middle-East alliance due to its allowance of the entry of other nations.

April, 1962: Elections for the National[99] and provincial assembly were held on the basis of Basic Democracies.

21 April, 1972: Martial Law lifted; constitutional rule is restored in the country. Hamoodur Rahman is sworn in as Chief Justice of Pakistan.

10 April, 1973: 1973 Constitution of Pakistan enacted by the National Assembly.

22 April, 2004: The European Parliament voted in favour of a new trade and cooperation agreement with Pakistan, giving a vital boost to Islamabad's relations with the European Union.

26 April, 2006: Pervez Musharraf lays foundation-stone of Diamir-Bhasha dam.

11 April, 2022: Shehbaz Sharif is sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

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Development of Balochistan among our top priorities: PM

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the law and order situation, ongoing protests and development projects in the province, with the premier stressing that the province's growth remains one of the government's top priorities.



The meeting took place in Lahore, where CM Bugti also extended Eidul Fitr greetings to the prime minister. Officials said that the two leaders held a detailed discussion on the political, economic and security situation of Balochistan, as well as the progress of federal development initiatives in the province.

The discussions emphasised the federal government's unwavering support for Balochistan, with PM Shehbaz stressing that all necessary steps would be taken to accelerate development initiatives and improve the quality of life for its people.

Following the meeting, CM Bugti shared details on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), expressing satisfaction with the prime minister's assurance of full cooperation and calling it a promising sign for the people of Balochistan.

Mr Bugti reiterated that ongoing projects, supported by the federal government, would play a crucial role in strengthening the province's economy and enhancing public welfare.

He emphasised that the government is taking all possible measures to resolve Balochistan's challenges while ensuring that all stakeholders are actively involved in the journey towards progress.

Meetings with political leaders Amid efforts to build political consensus, the chief minister also met other key political figures during Eid days, including National Party President Dr Abdul Malik Baloch, and Senator Maulana Abdul Wasey, provincial head of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F). Accompanied by his colleagues, Chief Minister Bugti visited Dr Baloch's residence, where they

exchanged Eid greetings and engaged in discussions about the province's overall situation and development prospects.

Among those present were prominent figures such as Senator Mir Kabir Ahmad Muhammad Shahi, provincial minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar, and Parliamentary Secretary Mir Obaidullah Gorgage.

The meeting underscored the importance of political collaboration in addressing Balochistan's issues. Mr Bugti reaffirmed his commitment to inclusive governance, welcoming constructive proposals from all political parties to promote peace and development in the province.

Later, the chief minister met Maulana Abdul Wasey and discussed political affairs and devel-

opment initiatives. Emphasising the need for harmony and cooperation, Mr Bugti insisted that all positive recommendations aimed at ensuring stability and prosperity in Balochistan would be valued. Relief in power tariff

Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz is expected to make a major announcement regarding a drastic reduction in electricity tariffs for both domestic and industrial consumers.

A senior official from the Prime Minister's Office said the premier will address the media during a briefing where the new relief package is likely to be revealed. "It is expected that the prime minister will announce a drastic cut in electricity tariffs for domestic and industrial consumers," the official said.

Recently, the prime minister has shelved a decision of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet regarding changes to the net metering policy for rooftop solar systems.

He reaffirmed that the government will continue its current solar policy, which allows electricity buyback from private producers at a rate of Rs27 per unit.

Courtesy: Dawn

UAE visa issues 'resolved', says envoy

Pakistanis can now avail five-year visas following the resolution of "existing issues", Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi was quoted as saying.

The development came during a meeting between Zaabi and Sindh Governor Karmran Khan Tessori at the Governor's House.

"Visa issues have been resolved, Pakistanis can get a five-year visa," a statement released by the Governor's House quoted Ambassador Zaabi as saying.

Dawn reached out to the UAE's mission in Islamabad for more clarity on the envoy's statement, but did not receive a response un-

til the filing of this report.

According to the statement, the envoy also invited the governor to visit the visa centre at the Karachi consulate.

Governor Tessori thanked the UAE diplomat for his country's investment in the province, especially in Karachi. The ambassador praised ongoing projects under the governor's initiative.

UAE authorities had lately increased the scrutiny of Pakistanis arriving in the country due to their alleged involvement in crime and unlawful activities, such as begging.

On December 23, a Senate panel was informed that all Pakistani



travellers to the UAE needed to be vetted and verified by the police.

In another meeting on Jan 9, the Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development was told that there were "no restrictions on work visas" for Pakistanis travelling to the UAE.

It was also learnt that visas to the UAE had been "unofficially closed" and its government had

reservations that Pakistanis, on visit visas, resort to begging in the country.

In an interview with Geo News in November last year, the UAE consul general in Karachi, Dr Bakheet Ateeq Alrem-eithi, had revealed that Pakistanis may be facing visa rejections due to their negative activities on social media. However, he clarified that there was no ban on UAE visas for Pakistani nationals, per se.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan is 'prepared for anything' India might try

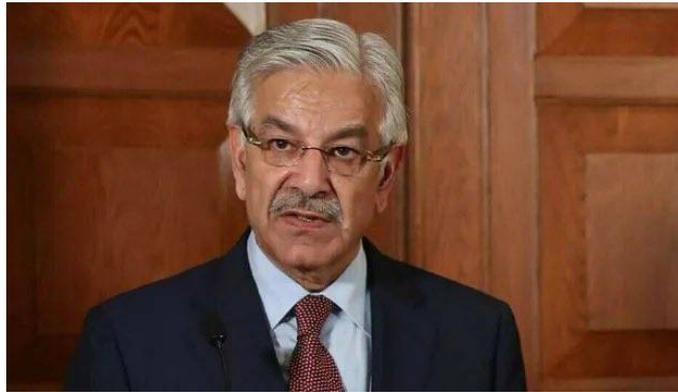
As friends in foreign capitals continue to advocate for a de-escalation of tensions in South Asia, Pakistan's defence minister said the country was ready for any incursion by India.

The two neighbours have been trading fire across the Line of Control (LoC) for four days now, with each blaming the other for provocation.

"We have reinforced our forces because it is something which is imminent now. So in that situation some strategic decisions have to be taken, so those decisions have been taken," Khawaja Asif told Reuters on Monday.

He said the military had briefed the government on the possibility of an Indian attack, but did not go into further details on his reasons for thinking an incursion was imminent.

His remarks follow New Delhi's increasingly aggressive posturing following an attack in a tourist resort in India-held Kashmir, which claimed over two dozen lives.



Immediately after the Pahalgam attack, India claimed two of the suspects were from Pakistan, albeit without proof. Islamabad has flatly denied any role and called for a neutral investigation.

In the interview, Mr Asif said Pakistan was on high alert and that it would only use its arsenal of nuclear weapons if "there is a direct threat to our existence".

Later, in an interview with Samaa TV, he said, "We should be mentally prepared, there is a war looming on the horizon."

The channel also quoted him as saying that there was a "vivid

possibility" that "we can have war in the next day or two or three or four (sic)".

However, he later had to clarify these remarks, telling Geo News: "They (the channel) asked me what the chances of war are, so I said that the next two to three days were crucial."

"If something has to happen, then it will occur in the next two to four days otherwise the immediate danger will pass."

Mr Asif also clarified that his statement should not be misconstrued as a categorical prediction that war would begin within the

next two to three days, reiterating that he had only said the "upcoming days would be crucial."

He reiterated that he had said there was a danger of war breaking out in the next few days but it could also be averted, as other countries in the region were working to avert any contentious situation and de-escalate the matter.

He said that Islamabad had approached friendly countries, including Gulf states and China, and also briefed Britain, the United States and others on the situation.

"Some of our friends in the Arabian Gulf have talked to both sides," Asif said, without naming the countries.

Over the past week, leaders and officials from China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the UK have been in touch with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy PM Ishaq Dar. All of them have urged a de-escalation of tensions.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan asks world to block arms flows to terrorists

A Pakistani diplomat has called for concerted efforts to intercept clandestine flows of modern and sophisticated weapons to armed groups such as the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and its Majeed Brigade faction who use safe havens in Afghanistan to launch deadly attacks inside Pakistan.

"Terrorist armed groups are in possession of billions worth of illicit arms abandoned in Afghanistan," Syed Atif Raza, a counselor at the Pakistan Mission to the United Nations, told an Arriva-Formua meeting of the UN Security Council, convened by Sierra Leone.

This format of council's meeting is named after a former Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN, Diego Arriva. It is a consultation process



which affords members of the Security Council the opportunity to hear persons in an informal setting.

The armament being used by TTP, BLA against Pakistani civilians and armed forces, UNSC meeting told

Speaking in a debate on "Small Arms and Light Weapons Management in UN Sanctions

Regimes", the Pakistani delegate said such armament was being used by the banned TTP and BLA terrorists in violence against civilians and the armed forces of Pakistan.

"These terrorist entities also receive external support and financing from our principal adversary," Mr Raza said in an obvious reference to India.

"We call upon our international partners to recover the vast stockpile of abandoned weapons, prevent their access to armed terrorist groups and take measures to close this thriving black market of illicit arms."

The misuse and illicit flow of small arms and light weapons aggravates conflicts, threatens socio-economic progress and subverts peace and security, he said, pointing out that they have become instruments of choice for state and non-state actors.

He said that these concerns were further compounded with increasing sophistication of illicit arms and access to modernised weapons at the disposal of illegal armed groups often operating across national boundaries.

Courtesy: Dawn

PM Shehbaz greets nation, Muslim world leaders on Eid

As the nation observes Eidul Fitr, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has extended heartfelt greeting to the people of the country and leaders of the Muslim world and said the country was going through a war against terrorism.

In his message to nation on the occasion, PM Shehbaz said, "The country is going through a war against terrorists. Officers and jawans of the Pakistan armed forces are sacrificing their lives for restoring law and order in the country."

"Eid day teaches us happiness, thankfulness, brotherhood and empathy," he added.

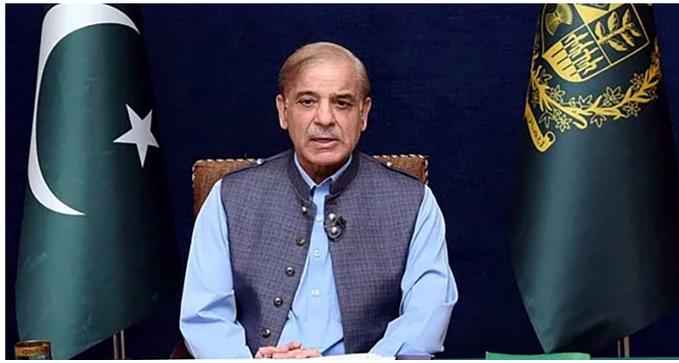
He said the holy month of Ramadan emphasises forbearance, patience and sacrifice and it was necessary for the people to continue practising these characteristics even after Ramadan besides sticking to Islamic principles.

"Today the country is facing threats from internal and external enemies," he said, highlighting the need to stay protected from "hatred, sectarianism and all sorts of extremism".

"We need to be united for integrity and stability of the country besides not letting any conspiracy to succeed," he added.

He said, "It is our collective responsibility to strengthen economy, society and national solidarity" and added that incumbent government was making all-out efforts for country's economic revival, stability of society and maintaining law and order. "We need to make joint efforts for putting the country on the road to progress."

The PM prayed to the Allah Almighty to elevate ranks of all martyrs and express solidarity with their family members. "Today we also pray to the Allah Almighty to elevate ranks of martyrs of Jaffar Express incident and equally share the grief of their family members. We need to remember our innocent brothers who are facing atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir besides Palestine. Pakistan is standing with the freedom strug-



gle of people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestinian people and would continue supporting them."

He appealed to the international community to play its due role in stopping human rights violations and solve their genuine problems. He also urged the nation to share joys of Eidul Fitr with weak and deserving brothers and sisters, relatives and neighbours and play their role in forming a welfare society.

Kuwait

In a telephone call with Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait, PM Shehbaz extended warm greetings to him, Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait.

Recalling the historical brotherly ties between the two countries, the PM reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen its cordial relations with Kuwait for mutually rewarding cooperation. He fondly recalled his warm and productive meeting with the crown prince in New York last year on sidelines of the UN General Assembly's annual session.

Turkiye

PM Shehbaz also telephoned President of Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to convey his warm greetings and best wishes to him, as well as to the brotherly people of Türkiye, on Eid.

He expressed satisfaction at the positive momentum in bilateral relations between the two countries. According to the Prime Minister Office, President Erdogan thanked PM Shehbaz for his good wishes on Eid and warmly reciprocated the same sentiments for

the people of Pakistan. He reaffirmed Türkiye's steadfast support for Pakistan on all important issues.

Jordan

Later, PM Shehbaz called King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and extended his best wishes to him and the people of Jordan. Both leaders also discussed the ongoing situation in Gaza.

King Abdullah praised Pakistan's support for Palestine and lauded its gesture of sending humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people.

The PM expressed his deep appreciation for Jordan's efforts, led by King Abdullah himself, for bringing peace in Gaza, ending the violence and ensuring delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance to Palestinians.

He highlighted Pakistan's strong and enduring bilateral relations with Jordan across all spheres including defence cooperation.

He reiterated Pakistan's desire to further enhance bilateral ties for the mutual benefit of the people of both countries.

The premier also extended a cordial invitation to King Abdullah to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience. King Abdullah reciprocated and extended an invitation to PM Shehbaz to visit Jordan.

PM Shehbaz also held similar telephonic conversation with the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev on auspicious occasion of Eidul-Fitr.

Courtesy: Dawn

'Indus Waters Treaty crucial for regional stability'

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar emphasised that the implementation of the Indus Waters Treaty was crucial for regional stability, vowing Pakistan would take all necessary measures to ensure its full enforcement.



"The treaty is critical to regional stability and its sanctity must be preserved," Mr Dar said while speaking at a high-level meeting convened to strategize Pakistan's response to India's suspension of the decades-old accord.

The meeting was attended by Law and Justice Minister Azam Nazir Tarrar, Attorney General Mansoor Awan, senior officials, technical experts, and former foreign secretaries.

Mr Dar condemned India's move as a "unilateral and illegal" action that contravenes international law, established norms of inter-state relations, and the treaty's provisions. He warned that India's attempts to "weaponise water" posed a serious threat to the region's peace and stability.

"The waters of the Indus River System remain a lifeline for Pakistan's 240 million people," he said, underscoring the strategic and humanitarian importance of preserving the treaty.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to safeguarding its rightful share of water under the treaty and pledged to continue advocating for its full implementation to protect the country's water security and the well-being of its people.

Courtesy: Dawn

Talha Ahmed: the social media star spreading laughter while silently battling Thalassaemia

Talha Ahmed, a rising star in the world of social media, has captured the hearts of thousands with his funny, relatable videos and infectious positive energy. Known for his lighthearted takes on everyday life, Talha has quickly become a fan favorite, using humor to connect with audiences and brighten their days.

But behind the cheerful smile and viral content lies a deeply personal struggle. Talha lives with Thalassaemia, a chronic blood disorder that demands regular medical treatment and can be physically and emotionally draining. Despite the challenges, he chooses to focus on joy, spreading laughter and positivity through his content.

His story is a powerful remind-



er that not all battles are visible. While entertaining the world, Talha is also raising awareness about Thalassaemia and breaking the stigma surrounding chronic illness. His courage, resilience, and commitment to uplifting others serve as an inspiration to many.

Through his journey, Talha Ahmed shows us that strength isn't just

about enduring pain it's about choosing hope, sharing light, and making the world a little brighter for everyone.

The custodian of the shrine Syed Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Deputy Director Information Muhammad Sabir Kaka and other guests awarded cash prizes to the winning wrestlers. An ongoing liter-

ary conference is also part of the festival, where renowned writers and intellectuals including Dr. Sher Mehrani, Syed Imdad Shah, Madad Ali Sindhi, Naseer Mirza and Taj Joyo will present research papers on the life, poetry, art and philosophy of Hazrat Sardar Ahmed Shah Lakiyari. Famous artists including Sanam Marvi, Shaman Mirali, Rukhsana Marvi, Asghar Shah, Allah Bux Khaskheli, Ghulam Abbas Babar and the shrine's own traditional singers will also perform during the festival gatherings. In addition to the religious ceremonies, various departments including Sindh Agriculture, Livestock, Agricultural Engineering, Poultry and Fisheries have set up informational and promotional stalls.

Courtesy: The Nation

'Pakistan won't strike first, but won't hold back either'

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said Pakistan will not strike India but reserves the right to retaliate, as he concluded his speech in the Senate on the recent tensions with India and diplomatic overtures deployed by Islamabad to contest New Delhi's allegations in light of the Pahalgam attack.

The Senate session also witnessed a call by PPP lawmaker Syed Masroor Ahsan, who endorsed the idea floated by the PTI seeking the involvement of PTI chief Imran Khan in the multi-party conference to send a "message of unity" in the country.

The idea initially floated by PTI's Ali Zafar was recalled by PTI's Aon Abbas in his speech on Tuesday, in which he said PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari, and PTI founder Imran Khan should participate in the moot to send a strong message.

PPP's Masroor Ahsan, while endorsing the idea, observed that the government should show flexibility and listen to the opposition. "Both sides need to set aside egos," he remarked. Earlier, at least three senators, Allama Nasir Abbas, Gurdeep Singh and Dost Muhammad, called for the release of Imran Khan from the Adiala jail.

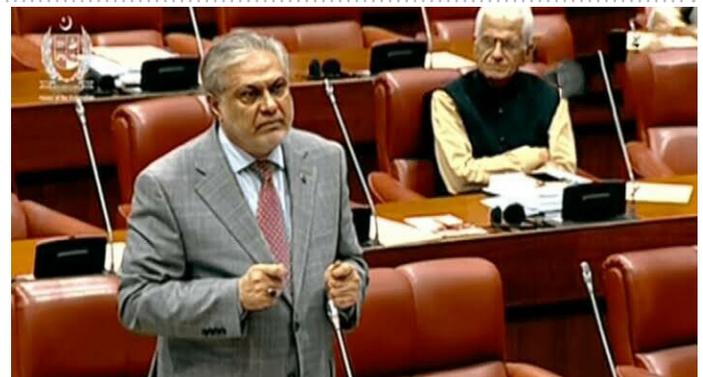
However, PML-N Senator Nasir Butt said Imran Khan would have to face the law and prove his innocence to secure his freedom.

Senator Saifullah Abro of the PTI chided former prime minister Nawaz Sharif for his purported silence over the Pahalgam attack and demanded that the political leadership make strong statements over the issue.

Meanwhile, FM Ishaq Dar said Pakistan would pay back India in the same coin, but it would not initiate an attack.

Sharing details of Pakistan's diplomatic overtures following the escalation in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, he said foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, China, the United Kingdom, Turkiye, Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Hungary have been taken on board about Pakistan's concerns.

He said he also spoke directly to the prime minister of Qatar. Mr Dar praised China and Turkiye for expressing clear support for Pakistan in the wake of the crisis. "I walked them through what happened India's psyche, its history and our concerns about what intentions it may have in light of that history," he told the House.



Mr Dar said intelligence reports suggest that India was contemplating some form of escalation.

Referring to the 2019 Pulwama attack that killed 40 Indian paramilitary personnel and was blamed on a Pakistan-based militant group, the deputy prime minister noted that New Delhi had used the incident as a pretext to revoke Article 370 of its constitution, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

The region was subsequently absorbed into India's union territory framework, a move Pakistan has repeatedly condemned. Ishaq Dar also said that India had been attempting to alter the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, which determined the water-sharing mechanism between both countries, for the past two years, citing changing circumstances.

"I have my doubts, much like other people, that this drama was

staged to suspend this treaty," he said while referring to the Pahalgam attack. He said there was no evidence that it was a false-flag operation. "What we do say with full confidence is that Pakistan has nothing to do with this [attack]."

According to Mr Dar, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offered an independent investigation into the Pahalgam attack fully knowing that Pakistan had nothing to do with it. He also made it clear that any meddling with Pakistani waters by India will not be tolerated at any cost and will be taken as an act of war.

Meanwhile, the House unanimously passed "The Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (Implementation) Bill, 2025" and "The National Commission for Minorities' Rights Bill 2025 brought before it as a supplementary agenda.

Courtesy: Dawn

Pakistan receives record \$4.1bn in remittances

Overseas Pakistanis sent home a record sum of \$4.1 billion last month, causing an upward revision in the targets for remittances and foreign exchange reserves, besides boosting hopes for a higher growth rate.

At the gong ceremony at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed said that record remittances had led to a reset of the FY25 target from \$35bn to \$38bn.

He said \$4.1bn in remittances reflected the government and the SBP's efforts to "incentivise the sending of money via formal channels".

Although the governor did not pinpoint the cause of rise in remittances, it is believed that hefty sums sent during Ramazan accounted for 10-15 per cent of the uptick. Hence, financial experts think that April may not see the same inflows.

According to Mr Ahmed, total remittances for FY25 are expected to be around \$38 billion, against the previous target of \$35bn.

Data issued by the State Bank shows inflows have already increased by \$7bn during the July-March period year-on-year. The country received a total of \$28.029bn during the first nine months of the current fiscal, while the inflow for the same period during FY24 amounted to \$21.037bn.

In FY24 the total remittances were \$30.25bn. If we add the \$7bn higher remittances to last year's total, the figure reaches \$37bn not far from the revised target of \$38bn.

The development was hailed by PM Shehbaz Sharif, who expressed satisfaction over the increase in remittances sent by overseas Pakistanis last month, terming it "a reflection of their trust in the government's policies".

In a statement, he said the surge of 37.4 per cent in remittances reflected the "dedication, passion, and trust of overseas Pakistanis in the country's economy".

Calling them a valuable asset, the



prime minister said overseas Pakistanis had strengthened the country's economy through their hard work.

"The nation is proud of hardworking overseas Pakistanis and the government is committed to providing them with all necessary facilities," PM Shehbaz said.

The governor projected economic growth at three per cent for FY25, against the World Bank's estimate of 2.6pc.

"It (GDP) would have grown to 4.2 per cent in the year had agricultural output remained robust at the previous year's level of eight per cent," he said.

The central bank chief was hopeful of an increase in foreign exchange reserves target from 13bn to \$14bn by end of FY25.

"The economy has successfully transitioned from instability to a stable mode, boosting the stakeholders' confidence in the economy.

"Pakistan has seen off a period of macroeconomic instability characterised by high inflation, low reserves and fears of default and entered a period of stable macroeconomic conditions and renewed confidence," Jameel Ahmed said.

He pointed to significant improvements across multiple indicators, signalling a much-needed revival of economic growth. He said inflation had come down substantially, the external current account balance had turned into a Surplus, forex buffers have been rebuilt, and public debt indicators have improved considerably during the past couple of years.

"Now it is crucial to focus on sustainable growth," he said, pointing out that enhancing productivity and boosting exports must become

central to Pakistan's growth model. as "exports directly contribute to greater productivity, innovation and foreign investment".

Mr Ahmad urged stakeholders to commit themselves to long-term strategies that ensure sustainable and inclusive growth. He underscored the need for reforms to address structural issues, avoid boom-bust cycles and stagnation. The governor reaffirmed that enhancing financial inclusion remained a top strategic goal for the SBP.

The governor shared key initiatives under the National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-28, including efforts to increase financial inclusion from 64 per cent to 75 per cent by 2028, while reducing the gender gap in financial services from 34 per cent to 25 per cent by 2028.

PSX Chairperson Dr Shamsah Akhtar emphasised the transformative power of financial education during her address.

"There is no doubt that literacy, particularly financial literacy, is critical for any society. Financial literacy serves as the bedrock for an inclusive economy.

Reflecting on the PSX's vision, MD & CEO Farrukh H. Sabzwari said Pakistan's investor base remains below 400,000, indicating that there is considerable room for growth.

"We are working closely with all stakeholders to educate the public on investment avenues and diversity in participation. With continued support, our aim is to expand the number of IPOs to 40 over the next three years, increasing market depth and investor confidence," he said.

Courtesy: Dawn

Baisakhi is a beautiful cultural festival of Punjab, says Maryam

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif in her special message on 'Baisakhi' said, "Baisakhi is a beautiful cultural festival of Punjab. The wheat harvest heralds the message of joys of 'Baisakhi' festivity. The 'Baisakhi' festi-



val pays back the fruit of the labour of hardworking farmer." She said, "I am happy that the Sikh community around the globe is celebrating 'Baisakhi' festival and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to them. We equally share the joy of Sikh community



on their 'Baisakhi' festival. The joy being felt on the eve of wheat harvest during the 'Baisakhi' festival in Kartarpur last year has still remains part of my pleasant memories." She added, "I feel proud that for the first time, 1000 tractors have been given free of cost to our farmer brothers who sowed wheat in Punjab. The farmers of Punjab, especially the farmers who grew wheat have been provided with seeds, fertilizers and agricultural equipment worth billions of rupees."

Courtesy: The Nation

Alhamra organises two-day workshop on canvas preparation to empower young artists



The Lahore Arts Council, Alhamra, inaugurated a two-days (29-30 April) (Tuesday-Wednesday) of painting workshop titled “How to Prepare a Canvas.” The workshop aimed at cultivating foundational and contemporary artistic skills among emerging painters. Hosted at the Alhamra Academy of Performing Arts, it drew a remarkable turnout of young art enthusiasts eager to hone their craft and explore new perspectives in visual expression. Renowned artist and workshop moderator Mian Athar engaged participants with a comprehensive exploration of artistic techniques, creative thought processes, visual analysis and evolving global trends in painting. His session offered theoretical insight and practical guidance, inspiring young minds to view art through a broader, more imaginative lens. Executive Director of the Lahore Arts Council, Syed Touqeer Haidar Kazmi, expressed his admiration for the young talent, stating, “Our youth are brimming with artistic potential and intellectual curiosity.

Alhamra is deeply committed to nurturing the talent by providing an inspiring, structured environment where creativity can flourish. The workshop is part of our larger mission to elevate artistic literacy and equip the next generation with the tools they need to express their unique visions.”

The workshop witnessed enthusiastic participation, with dozens of young individuals immersing themselves in the learning experience. From brushstroke techniques to conceptual thinking, attendees are gaining valuable insights that will shape their artistic journeys. By consistently organising such enriching initiatives, the Lahore Arts Council reaffirms its dedication to promoting art education and fostering a culture of creativity and innovation.

Alhamra remains a beacon for aspiring artists, where passion meets opportunity and tradition merges with modernity.

Courtesy: The Nation

27th annual festival of Hazrat Sardar Ahmed Shah Lakiyari begins

The 27th annual festival of the Sufi saint and renowned poet Hazrat Sardar Ahmed Shah Lakiyari commenced near New Saeedabad. The three-day celebrations were formally inaugurated by the shrine’s custodian Syed Shabbir Ahmed Shah, who laid a ceremonial chadar on the saint’s tomb and offered prayers. Thousands of devotees were present on the occasion. During the festival, the shrine has been beautifully decorated, while stalls for children’s entertainment including swings, sweets and toys have also been established over there. On the first day, alongside traditional “dhamal” (spiritual dance), thrilling Sindhi cultural wrestling



(Malakhra) competitions were held at the Malakhra ground, where wrestlers showcased their strength and skills and received great appreciation from the audience. Sufi singer Wazir Ali Shah captivated the audience by presenting soul-stirring Sufi poetry in his unique style, enchanting the gathering.

Courtesy: The Nation

Pakistani novelist nominated for ‘Young Woman of the Year’ award

Pakistani novelist and youth advocate, Alishba Khan Barech, has been named the winner of the “Young Woman of the Year” category at the prestigious Women Changing the World Awards 2025. The global ceremony was held at Park Hyatt London River Thames which was attended by international dignitaries, thought leaders, industry leaders, and guests from all over the world. The awards were presented by Princess Sarah Ferguson and

has long centered on rewriting dominant narratives, particularly around Balochistan, a region associated with militancy and conflict. She is Pakistan’s youngest novelist and memoirist, having written her debut novel at the age of 11, youngest memoirist at 14 and self-published author at 16. Her activism spans work with UNICEF Pakistan as a youth ambassador for mental health and polio eradication, and she currently serves as a youth advisor to



globally celebrated humanitarian Dr Terera Trent, said a press release received here on Saturday. Barech, the youngest self-published author from Pakistan and a native of Nushki, Balochistan, was earlier announced as one of 12 finalists in February 2025, selected from a remarkable pool of 751 nominations across more than 50 nations. Her selection was widely celebrated across Pakistan at the time, praised as a moment of national pride and a powerful message from Balochistan to the world. Barech triumphed among fellow finalists from India, Iran, Africa - standing as the only Pakistani and South Asian woman recognized in her category. Princess Sarah congratulated the winners and presented the awards. The Women Changing the World awards spearheaded by Dr Trent, honour outstanding women making a meaningful impact across diverse fields including literature, education, advocacy, sustainability, leadership, and innovation. The awards aim to amplify women’s voices and contributions worldwide and to “awaken hearts and recapture dreams” through collective empowerment. Alishba’s work

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and a member of the National Youth Council. She also serves as a youth ambassador for the cricket franchise Quetta Gladiators. She is also the first female Pashtun from Balochistan, South Asia to secure a merit scholarship to the John Locke Summer University. A self-taught writer, Alishba began crafting full-length novels at just 11, far beyond the scope of her peers’ school essays. Her passion for storytelling was shaped by her early interest in global affairs, further sharpened by growing up in Balochistan. Following the announcement, Alishba said, “As I’ve said before, my mission has always been to rewrite the narratives that define us. This award is dedicated with all my heart to my parents, my teachers, my beloved province Balochistan, and my country Pakistan. Yesterday, when my country’s name was called among global achievers, it was more than a personal milestone - it was proof that stories of resilience and brilliance can rise from Nushki and Quetta, not just the headlines of conflict and militancy we’ve grown used to.

Courtesy: Dawn

CM Maryam unveils plan to revive Punjab's film industry

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed relevant authorities to establish the province's first-ever film city, complete with a state-of-the-art film studio, post-production lab and Pakistan's first dedicated film school. Chairing a high-level meeting, the chief minister instructed that space be allocated for these initiatives within the newly developed Nawaz Sharif IT City. She also reviewed progress on design and planning aspects of the project. In a major move aimed at reviving the struggling film industry, CM Maryam constituted an eight-member committee to provide financial assistance for film production. A formal notification was issued following approval from the provincial cabinet. Se-

nior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has been appointed convener of the committee, which also includes Information Minister Azma Bukhari, Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman, Minister for Human Rights & Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, and four key provincial secretaries. The committee will review applications from filmmakers and production companies, assess ongoing and new film projects, and evaluate scripts of incomplete films. It will also formulate criteria for grants, box office incentives, and overall fund management. Sub-committees may be formed as needed to address specific issues. The committee's inaugural meeting, chaired by Marriyum Aurangzeb,



saw several key decisions taken to ensure swift implementation of CM Maryam's vision for a vibrant and sustainable film industry in Punjab.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has greeted the Christian community on the eve of Easter. "Happy Easter to all Christian brothers and sisters,"

said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in her greeting message for the Christian community on Easter.

She added, "The festival of Easter is a metaphor of joy and hope." She highlighted, "Every festival, including Easter, has a hidden message of love and brotherhood."

Courtesy: The Nation

Importance of scientific integrity, ethical standards highlighted

A scholarly and research-focused seminar titled "Research Ethics, Thesis Writing Skills, and the Role of DNA Barcoding in Modern Scientific Research" was held at the University of Education, Lahore – Vehari Campus. The seminar was organised under the supervision of Campus Principal Prof Dr Sheikh Israr Ahmad and Assistant Professor of Zoology Dr Muhammad Farhan Nasir. The event featured Dr Abeer Ishtiaq from the Department of Zoology, Islamia University Bahawalpur, as the chief guest and keynote speaker. In his address, Dr Ishtiaq emphasised that "research ethics are the foundation of any scientific inquiry, and when research is conducted within ethical boundaries, its outcomes are credible and impactful. Thesis writing is not merely a formality; it is an art that reflects the essence



of research, while DNA barcoding has revolutionised biological studies by enabling rapid species identification." Highlighting the significance of the seminar, Prof Dr Sheikh Israr Ahmad stated, "Our aim is to not only acquaint students with modern research methodologies but also to instill in them the importance of scientific integrity and ethical standards." Dr Muhammad Farhan Nasir added, "The true purpose of

research is to expand knowledge and serve society. Technologies like DNA barcoding are invaluable tools that help us understand and conserve biodiversity more effectively." The seminar witnessed an enthusiastic turnout from faculty and students of the Department of Zoology. Notable attendees included Dr Naveed Ahmad, Dr Imran, Ms Aaliya, Ms Aamna, Ms Saadia, Ms Maryam, Ms Ishrat, Ms Afreen, Mr Farooq, Mr

Hassan, Mr Haroon, and many others.

During the interactive Q&A session, students actively engaged with the speakers, showing great interest in various research topics and seeking expert guidance. The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks, where the efforts of the organising team were appreciated and acknowledged.

Courtesy: The Nation

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